

Message Text

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ACTION INR-10

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 3131

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINR MO BF

SUBJECT: NEW BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER, JOHN SPENCER RITCHIE
DUNCAN, C.M.G., M.B.E.

REF: NASSAU 1075

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. JOHN S. R. DUNCAN, BORN IN 1921, WAS EDUCATED AT EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY. HE ENTERED THE SUDAN POLITICAL SERVICE IN 1941 AND, AFTER A 1941-43 ARMY STINT, REMAINED IN THE SUDAN UNTIL 1956. HE SERVED AS PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNOR GENERAL OF THE SUDAN IN 1954 AND AS DEPUTY ADVISOR TO THE GOVERNOR ON CONSTITUTIONAL AND EXTERNAL MATTERS IN 1955. IN 1956 DUNCAN JOINED THE FOREIGN OFFICE AND SERVED FOR A BRIEF PERIOD AT THE JOINT SERVICES STAFF COLLEGE. IN 1958, HE WAS ASSIGNED AS POLITICAL AGENT IN DOHA. FROM 1959 TO 1962, HE WAS WITH THE BRITISH INFORMATION OFFICE IN NEW YORK AND THEN SERVED AS CONSUL GENERAL IN MUSCAT FROM 1963 TO 1965. BETWEEN 1966 AND 1969 HE HEADED THE FOREIGN OFFICE'S PERSONNEL DIVISION AND THEN SERVED AS NUMBER TWO IN CANBERRA (1969-70) AND HIGH COMMISSIONER IN LUSAKA (1971-74). DUNCAN HAS BEEN AMBASSADOR TO MOROCCO SINCE 1975. HE HAS ALSO WRITTEN TWO BOOKS: "THE SUDAN: A RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT" (1952) AND "THE SUDAN'S PATCH TO INDEPENDENCE" (1957). DUNCAN
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IS MARRIED WITH ONE DAUGHTER IN HER TWENTIES. HIS WIFE IS A DOCTOR. HE ENJOYS GOLF AND IS AN ACCOMPLISHED PIANO PLAYER.
END UNCLASSIFIED.

2. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. DUNCAN HAS BEEN FRIENDLY, ALTHOUGH NOT HIGHLY ACTIVE IN RABAT. THE BAHAMAS IS RUMORED TO BE HIS LAST POST BEFORE RETIREMENT AND NOT ONE TO WHICH HE LOOKS

FORWARD WITH ANY GREAT ENTHUSIASM. DUNCAN'S BLUFF SCOTS
DEMEANOR AND SOME-WHAT AUTOCRATIC WAYS HAVE NOT MADE HIM
OVERLY POPULAR WITH EITHER HIS STAFF OR THE MOROCCAN
COMMUNITY. HOWEVER, HE HAS BEEN FRIENDLY AND HELPFUL TO
AMERICAN PERSONNEL HERE AND CAN BE COUNTED ON TO SEEK A CLOSE
RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EMBASSY IN NASSAU, WHERE THE "BRITISH
CONNECTION" IS UNDOUBTEDLY OF MORE INTEREST TO US THAN IT IS
HERE.

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